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ABSTRACT

The St. Louis (Missouri) Public Schools After School program, which was implemented for the first time during the 1979-1980 school year, was designed to provide after school remedial mathematics and reading instruction to students in grades 1 to 8 who could not be serviced during the school day due to lack of space or program availability. Factors relative to the implementation of the program were examined for this report. Data were gathered through interviews and observations. The major findings were: (1) program administrators reported few problems with implementation; (2) the average reported attendance rates for October, 1979, through April, 1980, varied from 70 percent at one site to 91 percent at another, with discrepancies noted between teacher-reported rates and evaluator observations: (3) the attrition rate for the first semester was 18 percent, and (4) principals reported that there was little or no coordination of instructional efforts between regular classroom teachers and the After School teachers. Recommendations for future program implementation are presented. (MK)

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AN IMPLEMENTATION STUDY OF THE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

Program Description

The After School program was implemented for the first time during the 1979-80 school year. According to local guidelines the program is "designed to provide after school services for students in Grades 1-8 who cannot be serviced during the regular school day, due to lack of space or program availability..."

While both reading and mathematics remedial instruction may be offered in the After School program, reading is given first priority and mathematics programs are to be offered after reading needs have been met. Hoffman Basic II serves as the basic support system for the reading component and the Individualized Mathematics System (IMS) as the mathematics basic support system. If however, IMS materials are not available at an After School site, Science Research Associates (SRA) materials may be used.

All Title I programs are mandated to supplement, not supplant, regular classroom instruction in the area being remediated. Pupils are identified for participation in either reading or math on the basis of a qualifying test score. Except in special circumstances, pupils cannot be enrolled simultaneously in reading and math Title I remedial programs. However, all After School sites were given permission to duplicate services.

Teachers in either instructional area are to provide services for 10 pupils three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday). Each instructional period is 60 minutes in length, thus providing pupils with a total of 180 minutes of instruction per week. In addition, on each day of instruction teachers have 60 minutes of planning time.

The After School program currently operates in 9 schools, and consists of 20 reading and 22 mathematics classes. Six of the schools have five classes, one has six, and the other two have three classes each. In both schools with only three classes, one of the participating teachers rather than the principal* administers the program.

Purpose of the Evaluation

Since this was the first year during which the After School program operated, program administrators asked that factors relative to the implementation of the program be examined.

* In the remainder of this report the term principal will be used to designate the administrator of the program unless otherwise specified.

METHODS

Procedures

1. In early November a letter was sent to all Title I principals informing them of projected evaluations of Title I programs, including the After School program.

2. Local guidelines for the After School program were reviewed.

3. Pilot observations and informal interviews were conducted in one of the nine After School sites.

4. A Principal's Interview Form was developed and observational criteria were established. Principals or head teachers of the nine After School sites were interviewed.

5. After School classes were visited; attendance was noted and informal interviews were conducted with teachers. Some classes were visited a second time and teachers in those classes were interviewed by the evaluators. An attempt was made to create as little disruption in classroom routine as possible.

6. Attendance information for all After School classes was obtained from the Title I office for the months of October through April. These data were analyzed to determine attendance, dropout rates, and congruence with evaluators' observation.

Reporting Format

Major findings are reported in a series of underlined statements followed by supporting data and discussion. Conclusions and recommendations are made at the end of the report.

1. *Generally, administrators of After School programs reported few problems with program implementation. Most problems which were encountered were reportedly minimized by prompt administrator or teacher action.*

The After School program was selected at the local school level, largely because it was perceived by the committee of school personnel and parents charged with selecting Title I programs for the school to be a means of serving the needs of more eligible pupils than could be served during the regular school day. Yet, it was recognized that the After School program could present unique problems. Principals were therefore asked to report how they had coped with such factors as securing teachers, selecting pupils, teacher absences, walking home late in the day, sustaining pupil interest.

Securing Teachers

Principals reported they had experienced little or no problems in securing teachers. In all cases they said that a sufficient number of qualified teachers had volunteered for the program. Title I teachers were usually given first choice. However, in situations where more teachers applied than were needed, the principal selected those he thought were most qualified. In only one case did a principal report it was necessary to use a teacher who was perceived to be "not too good."

Pupil Selection

In addition to existing guidelines which provide selection criteria for identifying pupils for Title I programs, other factors were considered when selecting pupils for the After School program. In most cases, selection was related to placement in the Title I day program. For example, at two schools, students with the greatest need were placed in the regular school day Title I programs. At three other schools, younger students were given preference for regular day

instruction and at two schools where bussing was used, bussed children were placed in the day program. In addition, one principal stated that selection was based largely on student interest in order to keep down absenteeism and behavior problems. Another principal explained that an attempt was made to select pupils who could walk home together.

Teachers' Absences

Principals reported that teacher absences have been minimal and have not created any undue problems. Four of the principals reported that when teacher absences occurred, pupils were sent to another After School classroom. In the other five schools, principals reported that when teachers were absent, classes were cancelled and pupils were dismissed. Three of these five principals reported that when classes were cancelled parents were notified. The other two principals did not notify parents.

Walking Home Late In The Day

Principals reported that walking home after classes did present some problems. In several instances, concern had been expressed by parents for their children's safety and some parents of younger pupils had refused to have their children participate for this reason. Also, at one site some girls were not permitted by their parents to participate because of walking home late. At those schools where a potential problem existed, steps had been taken to assure pupil safety. For example, it was reported that at five of the nine schools children walked home in groups or older pupils walked with younger children. In some instances older brothers and sisters, not in the program, remained at school to accompany younger siblings home. Two schools had changed to an early schedule, largely to facilitate an earlier release of pupils in the After School classes, thus

assuring that children would not have to return home after dark. At the site where there was concern regarding girls walking home alone, boys from the program were assigned to walk with them.

Sustaining Pupil Interest

Sustaining pupil interest was not seen by principals as a major problem. In some cases pupils who were most interested in attending were chosen first. Two principals reported that they provided snacks for pupils and one stated that he felt many pupils seemed to like the special attention they received. Most teachers reported fairly high student interest. Several teachers said they had found it beneficial to both class morale and pupil interest level to have more informal classes than during the day. This allowed students to be more relaxed and to see the After School class as "something special."

Teachers in several schools, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the support systems because the materials did not hold pupil interest. This appeared to be most serious with the Hoffman Basic II materials, especially in the upper grades. Moreover, teachers of upper grade pupils indicated during interviews that lack of interest in the materials resulted in reduced attendance rates of pupils. Teachers at all grade levels expressed a need for greater flexibility in the selection of materials. Also, more supplementary material was seen as desirable for sustaining pupil interest and attendance.

2. *The average reported attendance rates for the months of October through April varied from 70% at one site to 91% at another. In some cases discrepancies were noted between teacher-reported attendance and evaluator-observed attendance.*

A study conducted several years ago on After School programs in nonpublic schools reported that absenteeism was a major problem, especially in the Spring. Therefore, an effort was made to determine pupil attendance rates in the current After School program. For this purpose, monthly attendance sheets, submitted to the Title I office, were obtained and reviewed. Also, during evaluators' visits to After School sites, a count was made of the actual number of pupils in attendance in each class.*

Analysis of attendance records revealed that the average daily attendance rate during the Fall semester for all nine After School program sites was less than that for the regular day program - 85.7% compared to 92.0%.† The day of the week on which classes were held had no apparent effect upon pupil attendance, nor did days immediately before or after a holiday.

Monthly attendance data, for the months of October through April, are shown in Table 1. It can be seen that average reported attendance for the nine sites during these months ranged from a low of 70% to a high of 91%. Monthly attendance ranged from a low of 64% (in January for site C) to a high of 96% (in October for site B). Attendance during the first semester was generally higher than during the second semester.

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*Powers, Jerry, Implementation and Student Achievement Evaluation Report for Component V the Nonpublic Remedial Program, St. Louis: Office of Research & Evaluation, St. Louis Public Schools, 1976.

†However, it should be noted that the average daily rate for the day program is based on all students and therefore is not directly comparable to the subset of students participating in Title I classes.

Table I

Percent of Enrolled Pupils Attending After School Sites for the Months of October through April

Month of Semester	After School Site								
	A %	B %	C %	D %	E %	F %	G %	H %	I %
October	*	96	89	90	77	91	80	92	91
November	82	91	88	90	67	88	77	81	94
December	85	88	91	86	82	86	66	81	93
January	73	89	89	93	71	90	64	77	90
February	80	89	85	89	73	73	68	79	92
March	79	84	86	85	71	69	68	65	94
April	73	82	82	72	77	76	68	91	86
Aver. Mo. Attendance	79	88	87	86	74	82	70	79	91

* No attendance data reported.

Four of the After School sites (A, F, G, & H) have reported attendance rates of less than 80%. Reasons for poor attendance rates are not known, however, it should be noted that at one of these sites the After School program was in competition with an afternoon sports program. Some pupils who did come to the After School program at this site were dismissed early to participate in sports, so that actual participation was lower than indicated by attendance reports.

Another factor that seems to have affected attendance is the grade level of pupils. Interviews with teachers and principals indicated that absenteeism was most severe with upper grade pupils. This higher rate of absenteeism in the upper grades might be related to the failure of some materials to sustain pupil interest. As pointed out above, some teachers stated that their upper grade pupils did not like the Hoffman Basic II material. Another possible explanation is that older pupils tend to be involved in more outside activities than younger pupils.

Evaluator-observed attendance on the day each school was initially visited ranged from 37.0% to 87.5%, with a few classes containing as few as only two students. The average observed attendance was 70.0%. This was considerably lower in some cases than the reported average attendance. Moreover, when attendance records were checked against evaluator counts of pupil attendance, discrepancies were found. In 12.5% of the classes, more pupils were reported as present than were actually observed. Also, it was found that the attendance records of one teacher did not reflect her absence on the day the school was visited, nor were pupils marked absent on this day, despite the fact that no class was held.

Because of these discrepancies, schools were revisited and again a comparison was made between observed and reported attendance. Analysis again revealed differences between submitted attendance forms and evaluator observations in approximately the same proportion of cases (15%) as the first analysis. Additional problems were noted during these visits. It was also found that some teachers did not mark attendance on a daily basis. One teacher had marked pupil attendance through the end of the month, although a week of the month remained at the time of the visit. Also, projected figures were greater than observed attendance for the day of the visit. The most severe attendance problem occurred at one site where pupils were repeatedly permitted to leave early, particularly in one class where on one occasion only one pupil was present 15 minutes after the start of class. This matter was referred to the Area Office and immediate action was taken by area administrators to inform the school principal that either classes be held as scheduled or the program dropped. Area administrators followed up this ultimatum with personal visits to the After School site.

3. *The attrition rate for the first semester was approximately 18%. Generally, withdrawn pupils were replaced from the waiting list, however, in some cases non-attending pupils were retained on class lists, and there appeared to be no established policy for replacing them.*

In examining the attrition rate through an analysis of attendance reports, it was found that approximately 18% of the pupils who were initially enrolled in the After School program were no longer enrolled at the end of the first semester. One percent had to be dropped shortly after the program began when it was found that they had scored above the cutoff point on the selection test. About five percent had transferred to another school or to the Day Title I program. The remaining 12% had dropped out of the program for other reasons. At one school, for example, parents of the three pupils who dropped out had requested that their children no longer take part in the program. One of the teachers involved suggested that the pupils had simply lost interest and had asked their parents to intervene for them.

Principals and teachers generally did not feel that the dropout rate was a cause for concern. Principals reported that students on the waiting list who wanted to participate in the program were enrolled in withdrawn pupils' places so that there were very few days when less than ten pupils were enrolled in any one class. However, attendance records revealed that in some classes pupils who were reported as absent for more than a month were carried on class lists as enrolled pupils. Moreover, there were no established procedures for dealing with the problem. Some teachers reported that once a pupil was enrolled he/she was not dropped unless parents requested withdrawal. Generally, there was no policy regarding the length of time non-attending pupils should be carried on class lists replacing them.

4. *Principals reported there was little or no coordination of instructional effort between the regular classroom teacher and the After School teacher.*

Local guidelines encourage coordination between After School teachers, both reading and mathematics, and the sending classroom teacher. Principals were therefore asked to indicate to what extent these teachers attempted to work together.

One principal reported that teachers conferred with one another "to get a feel of what is giving youngsters a problem," adding that this approach was more effective than just looking at test scores. Six of the nine principals indicated that there was very little coordination of instructional effort and that what did occur was primarily informal in nature. (One principal described it as "mostly hallway talk.") Two of the principals reported there was no coordination of instruction. One of these principals felt coordination could not occur due to the way the curriculum is set up; however, he did feel that the program should be structured to identify needs of pupils.

Although five of the nine principals indicated that a cooperative instructional approach would be beneficial, only one site had attempted to provide for an exchange of pupil information between Title I and regular classroom teachers.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The option of After School classes was available, for Title I school selection, for the first time this year. An analysis of implementation factors was requested to determine if there were any impediments to the successful operation of the program.

During interviews administrators of After School sites reported few implementation problems. They also indicated that most areas of potential concern, such as securing teachers, selecting pupils, and students' walking home late in the day, were effectively dealt with at the site level.

Several problems related to attendance were identified by evaluators. Based on the first and second rounds of observations, evaluators found discrepancies of 12% and 15% respectively between observed attendance and teacher-reported attendance. In each of these discrepancies, the teacher reported higher attendance than was observed by the evaluators. Additionally, it was found that some pupils were carried on enrollment lists for considerable periods of time after they had stopped attending classes. Attendance was found to be a site specific problem, i.e., pupils at some sites attended with regularity while other sites were not able to motivate pupils to attend.

Sustaining pupil interest appeared to be more of a problem in the upper grades where teachers indicated that pupils found Hoffman Basic II materials uninteresting. Some teachers reported they had attempted to increase students' interest and attendance through the use of supplementary materials and a more relaxed informal atmosphere.

Evaluators also noted coordination of instruction generally did not occur. Only one site reported that an attempt had been made to provide for an exchange of pupil information between daytime classroom teachers and After School teachers.

The After School program option offers several unique advantages: (a) it permits Title I school sites to offer additional remedial classes by taking advantage of available facilities after regular school hours, (b) it insures that participating pupils receive supplementary instruction without any loss of regular school instructional time, and (c) it reduces scheduling problems.

In light of these potential benefits and identified problems several recommendations are made:

1. Since pupils participate in the After School program following a full day of regular classes, it is especially important that it be interesting as well as academically sound. Teacher dissatisfaction with the Basic II program, which is used as the instructional support system of reading in the After School program, has been documented in several past evaluation reports.* In addition, there is no evidence to suggest that this support system is either effective or well-implemented. Therefore, it is suggested that greater flexibility be given After School teachers in the selection of instructional materials.

2. A well-defined attendance policy should be established. This policy should include procedures for replacing pupils who do not attend regularly, and there should be a clear understanding that the After School program is voluntary relative to signing up, but once enrolled, attendance should be mandatory with reasonable allowances for special needs.

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*Powers, Jerry, An Implementation Study of the Title I Reading and Math Programs in the St. Louis Public Schools, St. Louis: Office of Research & Evaluation, St. Louis Public Schools, 1978.

*Carapella, Ruth & Mertz, Ronald, An Implementation Study of the Title I Reading Improvement Teams Program, St. Louis: Office of Research & Evaluation, St. Louis Public Schools, 1980.

When classes are operated with very few pupils in attendance the cost of instruction becomes excessive. If regular attendance cannot be maintained in an After School class, it should be discontinued.

3. *It is recognized that principals were successful in identifying and reducing or eliminating many of the problems encountered when establishing the After School program. Yet, a number of concerns identified by the evaluators remain. Therefore, it is suggested that the following procedures be adopted as the modus operandi for the After School program and that the principal be responsible for their implementation:*

   a. *Parents should be notified when classes are cancelled, or when pupils are dismissed early, in that the school has assumed the responsibility for the child's well-being during after school hours.*

   b. *Absences from the After School program should be followed up when the pupil is present during the day but not for After School classes.*

   c. *Attendance records should reflect actual pupil attendance and should be verified before submission to the Title I office.*

4. *Provision should be made for the coordination of instructional efforts between the day teacher and the After School teacher either through scheduled meetings or through written communications.*

5. *While achievement results are not included in this report, such information will be available in the 1979-80 ESEA Title I RIT and MIT Achievement Results report, which is scheduled for dissemination in July, 1980, and it is recommended that administrators review these results.*